



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 601

February Session, 2000

Substitute Senate Bill No. 467

Senate, April 13, 2000

The Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding reported through SEN. LOONEY of the 11th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

An Act Concerning Information Technology Workforce Development.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (a) The Departments of Economic and Community
2 Development and Higher Education shall produce a long-range
3 strategic plan for information technology workforce development that
4 addresses Connecticut's workforce and research needs as they relate to
5 information technology and electronic commerce. The Commissioners
6 of Economic and Community Development and Higher Education
7 shall appoint a task force to develop the plan. The task force shall
8 include representatives of the Departments of Economic and
9 Community Development and Higher Education, the Labor
10 Department, the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission,
11 the information technology and software industries, The University of
12 Connecticut, the Connecticut State University system, the community-
13 technical colleges, and the Connecticut Council of Independent

14 Colleges and any other representatives the commissioners deem
15 necessary.

16 (b) The plan shall specify: (1) The number and job descriptions of
17 information technology workers in key industries, (2) methods to
18 generate a sufficient number of information technology graduates to
19 fill identified needs, (3) methods to effectively link appropriate and
20 trained graduates to information technology jobs in this state, (4) what
21 programmatic and curricular emphasis should be developed to
22 support the growth of electronic commerce, software and information
23 technology industries, and (5) methods higher education and private
24 industry can use to continue to address information technology
25 workforce needs as they change and evolve over time.

26 Sec. 2. (NEW) The Board of Governors of Higher Education shall
27 establish, within available appropriations, a loan reimbursement
28 program for students who (1) attend public and independent
29 institutions of higher education in this state, (2) major in information
30 technology related fields and receive a terminal degree or certificate in
31 such field, and (3) are employed for an electronic or information
32 technology intensive company in an occupation identified as
33 information technology intensive through the standard industrial
34 classification system of the Bureau of Census of the United States
35 Department of Commerce. The program shall provide grants to
36 eligible persons to assist them in paying off their student loans.
37 Persons may apply for grants to the Department of Higher Education
38 at such time and in such manner as the Commissioner of Higher
39 Education prescribes.

40 Sec. 3. (NEW) Public institutions of higher education shall establish
41 information technology externship programs to allow professors and
42 other personnel to maintain summer or nonacademic term
43 employment with electronic and information technology intensive
44 companies in occupations identified as information technology

45 intensive through the standard industrial classification system of the
46 Bureau of Census of the United States Department of Commerce.

47 Sec. 4. (NEW) The Commissioner of Economic and Community
48 Development shall assist companies in the software and information
49 technology cluster identified pursuant to section 32-4g of the general
50 statutes, to develop a cooperative internship program for students at
51 institutions of higher education in this state or another state who are
52 majoring in information technology related fields.

53 Sec. 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000.

ED Committee Vote: Yea 30 Nay 0 JF C/R FIN

FIN Committee Vote: Yea 41 Nay 0 JFS

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: Cost

Affected Agencies: Departments of Economic Development and Higher Education, Constituent Units of Higher Education

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation**State Impact:**

Section 1 of the bill requires the Departments of Economic Development (DECD) and Higher Education (DHE) to assemble a task force for the purposes of producing a long-range plan for information technology workforce development in the state. Passage of the bill would require \$100,000 in additional resources.

Section 2 requires DHE to establish a loan reimbursement program to assist students who receive degrees or certificates in technology related fields in paying off their student loans. These individuals must be employed in electronic or information technology intensive occupations. Although the bill provides that the Department of Higher Education is to create this program within available appropriations, there are no funds currently appropriated for this purpose. Passage of the bill would result in future costs ranging from \$250,000 - 500,000 in FY 2002. Costs in subsequent years are

dependent upon the number of individuals who apply for and receive loans.

In 1983, the Teacher Incentive Loan Program (TILP) was created to attract students to teach in designated shortage areas, which included math, chemistry and physics. Under TILP, annual loans of \$5,000 for independent college students and \$3,000 for public college students were forgiven at the rate of 20% per year for teaching in a shortage area subject at a state public school. Almost 300 individuals received \$1.2 million in TILP loans and approximately half were forgiven and half were repaid.

Although no TILP loans have been given since 1989, a number of the loans remain in repayment status. It should be noted that the program was financed through a \$3 million bond authorization from the previous year that was earmarked for scholarships. The initial appropriation for this program was \$175,000 in FY 1984 and \$350,000 in FY 1985. These funds were provided for the servicing of loans and the general administration of the program.

In addition, the Academic Excellence Loan Program was established in 1984 to attract academically talented students to teach in Connecticut public schools. Approximately 200 students received \$2.2 million in loans with half being forgiven and half being repaid. Finally, DHE currently administers the federally funded Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship Program.

Section 3 requires public institutions of higher education to establish information technology externship programs for professors. DHE has indicated that costs associated with externships as described in the bill are generally \$10,000 – 12,000 per participant. Passage of the bill would result in potential indeterminate costs depending upon the structure of the programs and the number of individuals who participate.

Finally, section 4 requires DECD to assist companies in developing student internship programs. Passage of the bill would require approximately \$20,000 in additional resources, primarily to be used for marketing purposes.

OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 467

**AN ACT CONCERNING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.****SUMMARY:**

This bill provides incentives to encourage students to enter high-tech fields. It requires the Board of Governors of Higher Education, within appropriations, to establish a grant program to reimburse loans for students who (1) attend college in Connecticut, (2) major and receive degrees or terminal certificates in information technology-related fields, and (3) are employed by an electronic commerce or information technology company and work in information-technology-intensive occupations. Eligible people must apply to the Department of Higher Education (DHE) for grants when and how the higher education commissioner specifies.

The bill also requires public colleges to establish programs to allow professors and other staff to be employed by such companies in such occupations during the summer or outside of academic terms. And it requires the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to help companies in the software and information technology cluster develop a cooperative internship program for students majoring in information technology-related fields. The students can be attending colleges or universities in or outside Connecticut.

Finally, the bill requires the DECD and DHE commissioners to appoint a task force to develop a long-range strategic plan to address information technology and electronic commerce workforce development and research needs in the state.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2000

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Task Force Members

The task force must include representatives from:

1. the Higher Education, Economic and Community Development, and Labor departments;
2. the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission;
3. the University of Connecticut, Connecticut State University, and the community-technical colleges;
4. the Connecticut Council of Independent Colleges;
5. the information technology and software industries; and
6. any others the commissioners think necessary.

Plan Components

The long-range plan must specify:

1. the number and job descriptions of information technology workers in key industries;
2. ways to generate enough graduates to meet identified needs;
3. ways to effectively link trained graduates to information technology jobs in Connecticut;
4. the programs and curricular emphases to develop to support the growth of electronic commerce, software, and information technology industries; and
5. ways for higher education and private industry to address changing information technology workforce needs.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference

Yea 30 Nay 0

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 41 Nay 0